

IN THE CLAIMS

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What is claimed is

- 1 1. A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:
- 2 forming a conformal layer over a non-resist deposited layer that is formed on
- 3 a uniform surface, the deposited layer including a reticle pattern; and
- 4 inspecting the reticle pattern for defects. *non-resist*
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein:
- 2 the conformal layer comprises a conductive material.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein:
- 2 the conformal layer comprises titanium.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein:
- 2 the conformal layer comprises a layer of titanium nitride formed over a layer
- 3 of titanium.
- 1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein:
- 2 the reticle pattern in the deposited layer includes features having a minimum
- 3 size L, and the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than $1/2L$.

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1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein:

2 the conformal layer has a thickness of no more than 1000Å.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 the deposited layer comprises silicon oxide.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein:

2 ^{unresist} the deposited layer comprises a layer of undoped silicon dioxide formed on a
3 layer of phosphosilicate glass.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 the thickness of the deposited layer is greater than 2500Å.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 the thickness of the deposited layer is greater than 5000Å.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 the uniform surface comprises a silicon substrate.

1 12. A method of verifying a reticle, comprising the steps of:
2 forming a conductive conformal layer greater than 100Å over a deposited
3 layer patterned with a reticle; and
4 inspecting the pattern in the deposited-layer.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein:
2 inspecting the pattern comprises automatically inspecting the pattern with
3 pattern inspection equipment.

1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein:
2 automatically inspecting the pattern includes automatically aligning a wafer in
3 the pattern inspection equipment with the pattern formed in the deposited layer.

1 15. The method of claim 12, wherein:
2 the pattern comprises a contact reticle pattern.

1 16. The method of claim 12, further including:
2 patterning the deposited layer with the reticle includes
3 patterning a layer of resist formed over the deposited layer with the
4 reticle pattern,
5 etching the deposited layer, and
6 removing the resist.

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- 1 17. A method, comprising the steps of:
- 2 forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface; and
- 3 increasing an inspection contrast between patterned and non-patterned
- 4 portions of the reticle patterned layer by forming a conformal layer over the reticle
- 5 patterned layer; and
- 6 inspecting the reticle patterned layer.

- 1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein:
- 2 forming at least one reticle patterned layer on a uniform surface comprises
- 3 depositing a silicon oxide containing layer.

- 1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein:
- 2 forming the conformal layer comprises depositing a conductive conformal
- 3 layer.

- 1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein:
- 2 the conductive conformal layer comprises an interconnect adhering layer.